

**THANKSGIVING MESSAGE**  
**NOVEMBER 2004**

They say you don't appreciate what you have until you see "how the rest of the world lives" or someone tries to destroy your way of life. Over the last three (plus) tough years, the vast majority of American Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Sailors have seen "how the rest" live, and understand more clearly why our Nation continues to draw relentless waves of immigrants seeking a free, pluralistic society filled with opportunity. American Citizens have concurrently seen our Country under attack by ruthless enemies of freedom, and come to appreciate the very special, uniquely positive essence of what America stands for. The contrast is striking; the appeal of "America" – imperfect but resilient, progressive and positive – is irresistible to millions of people worldwide, as both a destination and a source of inspiration for a better, more fulfilling life.

This same phenomenon is what drew settlers to America's shores nearly four centuries ago. Our Thanksgiving traditions reflect a tradition of celebrating our good fortune to be able to live, prosper and grow our families in a land where the rule of law, freedom of religion and almost unlimited opportunities are the norm. Abraham Lincoln revived the "Thanksgiving" holiday in 1863, during the most terrible war America has ever fought.

This Thanksgiving finds over 130,000 "Soldiers" from all Services (to include members of our Military Civilian workforce) deployed away from their homes in harm's way – over 900 of them wear the INSCOM patch. Tens of thousands of others will work through the holidays in direct support of them. It's appropriate for us to reflect on what it means to be an American "Soldier" during this pivotal period in our Nation's history, and to redouble our commitment to our comrades-in-arms and the historic mission we're engaged in for the sake of our families, communities and collective future.

As we move into the holiday season, I also want us all to make sure that we lose none of our people -- Soldiers, Civilians or family members -- through careless accidents. As winter comes upon us we must remember to drive with caution. Plan holiday trips carefully, make sure vehicles are winter safe and operating correctly, wear seatbelts and ensure that vehicle passengers do also, give plenty of travel time and never drive while under the influence of alcohol. Your families, America and INSCOM need you safe and healthy.

Thanks to each of you for all you do, accomplish and sacrifice on our Army and Nation's behalf. You're making history, protecting our fellow Citizens, and giving thousands of decent, less fortunate people abroad a chance for a better tomorrow. No other Nation is able or willing to take on this historic mission, which comes at heavy cost. Have a happy and safe Thanksgiving 2004!

JFK